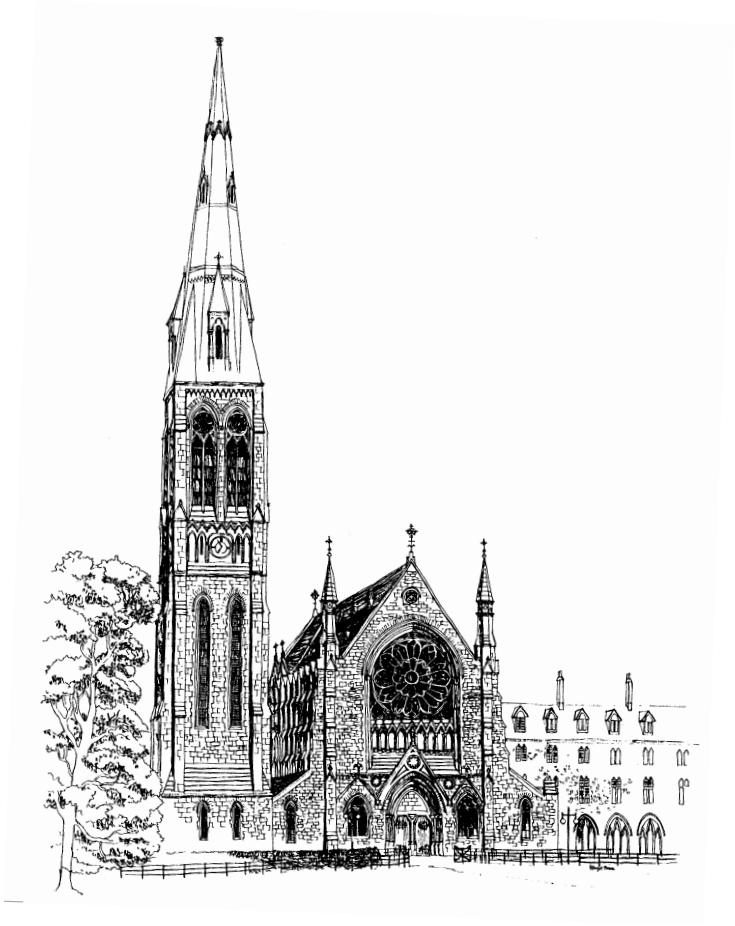
Chapter IX

SEMINARY



The College Chapel **at Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth**

Ordination to the Priesthood

Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity, Waterford
Sunday, 23rd November 2025
by Most Reverend Alphonsus Cullinan, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore

Stuart McGovern, Waterford and Lismore

Cathedral of Christ the King, Mullingar
Sunday 29th November 2025
by Most Reverend Tom Deenihan, Bishop of Meath

Anthony Kerr, Meath

St Colman's Church, Dromore
Sunday 11th January 2026
by His Grace Most Reverend Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Apostolic Administrator of Dromore

Anthony Moffett, Dromore

St Macartan's Cathedral, Monaghan
Sunday 26th April 2026
by Most Reverend Lawrence Duffy, Bishop of Clogher

Stephen Sherry, Clogher

St Colman's Cathedral, Cobh
Sunday 24th May 2026
by Most Reverend William Crean, Bishop of Cloyne

Tiernan Burke, Cloyne

St Columb's Church, Derry
Sunday 14th June 2026
by Most Reverend Donal McKeown, Bishop of Derry

Stephen Baxter, Derry

Ordination to Diaconate

St Macartan's Cathedral, Monaghan
Sunday 29th June 2025
by Most Reverend Lawrence Duffy, Bishop of Clogher

Stephen Sherry, Clogher

St Patrick's Church, Whitechurch Saturday 30th August 2025 by Most Reverend William Crean, Bishop of Cloyne

Tiernan Burke, Cloyne

Admission to Candidacy for Ordination as Deacon and Priest

St Mary's Oratory, St Patrick's College, Maynooth
Thursday, 4th December 2025
by Most Reverend Dónal Roche, Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin

Liam Coyle, Raphoe
Patrick Fiehn, Dublin
Martin Smith, Meath

Ministry of Acolyte

St Mary's Oratory, St Patrick's College, Maynooth
Thursday, 23rd October 2025
by Most Reverend Denis Nulty, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin

Ciaran Carragher, Armagh
Damien Kirkpatrick, Down and Connor
Patrick Ibu Oshie, Ogoja (Resident in Achonry)
Israel Etebe Osikang, Ogoja (Resident in Achonry)
William O'Shea, Cloyne

Matricula

Nomina eorum qui in anno academico MMXXV– MMXXVI diebus infradictis in album academicum Seminarii sunt relati ad ordinem classium digesta.

In Schola Theologiae Prima, die 22 Septembris 2025

COYLE, Liam, Raphoe
LUCEY, Jack, Cloyne
MCPARLAND, Philip, Dromore
SMITH, Martin, Meath

In Schola Philosophiae et Artium Prima, die 22 Septembris 2025

BRADY, Diarmuid, Kildare and Leighlin
CORLESS, David, Tuam
CUNNINGHAM, Paschal, Down and Connor
DUDDY, Gary, Derry
GORMLEY, Eoin, Dublin
HICKEY, Cathal, Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora
LEAVY, Kevin, Ardagh and Clonmacnois
MCDONNELL, Mark, Dromore
O'BOYLE, Gerard, Down and Connor
O'MULLAN, Darach, Down and Connor
Ó'DONNGHAILE, Dearcán, Raphoe
TRACEY, Daniel, Clogher

Diocesan Seminarians 2025-2026

The following is the list of seminarians who attended St Patrick's National Seminary during the last academic year.

Achonry
Oshie, Patrick Ibu……...III Stage of Configuration – Theology
Osikang, Israel Etebe……..III Stage of Configuration – Theology

Ardagh and Clonmacnois
Leavy, Kevin……I Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy

Armagh
Carragher, Ciarán……...III Stage of Configuration – Theology

Clogher
Tracey, Daniel.....I Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy

Cloyne
O'Shea, William……. III Stage of Configuration – Theology
Lucey, Jack……..I Stage of Configuration - Theology

Cork and Ross
McNamara, Alan…….II Stage of Discipleship - Philosophy

Derry
Duddy, Gary…….I Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy

Down and Connor
Kirkpatrick, Damien……III Stage of Configuration – Theology
Corrigan, Ciarán …….II Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy
Quigley, Gareth ……..II Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy
Cunningham, Paschal……..I Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy
O'Boyle, Gerard……..I Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy
O'Mullan, Darach…..……..I Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy

Dromore
McParland, Philip ……I Stage of Configuration – Theology
McDonnell, Mark…….I Stage of Discipleship - Philosophy

Dublin
Fiehn, Patrick …….II Stage of Configuration - Theology
McDonnell, Finn ……III Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy
Gormley, Eoin…….I Stage of Discipleship - Philosophy

Galway, Kilmacduagh and Kilfenora
Hickey, Cathal……I Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy

Kildare and Leighlin
Brady, Diarmuid……I Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy

Killaloe

Nestor, Mark ……II Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy
Tuohy, Brian ……II Stage of Discipleship - Philosophy

Meath
Smith, Martin ……I Stage of Configuration – Theology
Tamburrino, Nicola ……II Stage of Discipleship - Philosophy

Ossory
Madigan, Eoin ……I Stage of Configuration – Theology

Raphoe
Tumwekwase, Barnabas……II Stage of Configuration – Philosophy
Coyle, Liam……...……I Stage of Configuration – Theology

Eoin O'Donnell ……II Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy
Ó'Donnghaile, Dearcán……I Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy

Tuam
Siemionkowski, Wiktor .....III Stage of Discipleship – Philosophy
Corless, David……..I Stage of Discipleship - Philosophy

Waterford and Lismore
O'Mahony, Owen ……..II Stage of Discipleship - Philosophy

INTERNATIONAL DIOCESES

Nitra , Slovakia
Broniš, Dominik .....III Stage of Configuration – Theology (Erasmus+)

Maynooth College Choirs

Director of Sacred Music: John O'Keeffe, PhD, HDE, LTCL, H. Dip. Theol, K.S.G.

College Choirs

The *Seminary Choir* assists at college liturgies on Sundays and feast days. In addition to contemporary vernacular liturgical music, its repertoire includes plainchant and native Irish religious music and polyphony from both eastern and western Christian traditions. The choir has a membership of around sixteen clerical students, and practices twice weekly.

Schola Gregoriana Maynooth is an all-female chant group whose members are drawn from a specialist module in chant performance offered jointly by St Patrick's College and Maynooth University The group regularly represents the college and country at international chant festivals and its CD recording, *Saints and Scholars*, features music from the feasts of St John the Baptist and St Patrick.

The *College Chapel Choir* is a mixed choir of students, staff and alumni who share a particular interest and expertise in liturgical music. It assists at the liturgies of the Easter Triduum, the Pontifical Graduations and other formal ceremonies, and presents concerts of sacred music to mark major College events.

Music at Maynooth College

Music was established on a formal basis in the college with the appointment of the first *Professor of Church Chant and Organ* in 1888, in the person of the German scholar-priest, Heinrich Bewerunge of the diocese of Paderborn. Fr Bewerunge was a prominent Cecelian – a movement that aimed to restore Gregorian Chant following its neglect in the 19th Century. He was also an internationally regarded scholar who established in Maynooth a rich tradition of plainchant and polyphony, some key elements of which continue to be woven into the seminary's annual liturgical cycle. Bewerunge's influence was a formidable one, not only in the College, but also in the general musical life of the country. He established the seminary choir to very exacting standards of performance, and equipped the College Library with the most scholarly music editions of the day. In addition, he wrote voluminously on all the musico-philosophic subjects of the time.

The maintenance and development of a rich tradition of liturgical music is accorded great importance in Maynooth. *Feasts and Seasons,* a series of collections containing appropriate vernacular music for the liturgical year, and available in book and CD, is widely used throughout the country by parish congregations and choirs. Both volumes represent a sampling of new liturgical material continually being developed in the National Seminary to sustain and enrich liturgical worship in an Irish context. All seminarians are involved to a significant degree in preparation, practice and reflection on music in the liturgy. The input given to the whole seminary community is outlined on the pages which follow.

Music in Liturgy

Director of Sacred Music: John O'Keeffe, PhD, HDE, LTCL

Seminary Community
24 hours

This course initiates the students into an appreciation of the richness of musical expression of the Church's rites, principally the Eucharist and Liturgy of the Hours. This is done through the various sung texts associated with the roles of presider, assembly, choir, cantor, etc. It does so in the context of the graduated unfolding of the college year and provides a necessary weekly forum for preparation and reflection on music in the liturgy. The rites themselves, the range of presiders and the liturgy group structure ensures a rich and varied liturgical experience in the course of a year.

Throughout the course their principal role as participating members of the assembly and its importance to the community is emphasised. As the year progresses and they grow in confidence, and as the community need arises, students will be trained to make more specific contributions as choir-members, cantors, psalmists or instrumentalists.

Music in the Eucharist:

Ordinary

- Mass settings in English
    - Bodley
    - O'Carroll
    - 'Lourdes'
    - Feeley
    - Lawton
    - McCann
    - Sexton
    - O'Keeffe
    - McMillan
    - Roman Missal (sung dialogues)
    - Apostles' Creed
- Mass settings in Irish – text and music
    - Excerpts from Ó Riada, McDonagh, Ahern, Ó Canainn
    - *An Ghlóir* and *Ár nAthair*
- Mass settings in Latin
    - Excerpts from Gregorian Mass XVIII, VIII, XIII
    - Credo III
    - Credo 'San Domenico'
    - Jubilee Mass

Proper

- Psalms, antiphons, hymns and other sung texts associated with specific celebrations are introduced and rehearsed
- Scriptural and liturgical significance of the various texts are highlighted and contextualised
- Students are prepared here for full musical participation in the seasons of:
    - Advent
    - Lent
    - Holy Week
    - Easter

Music in the Liturgy of the Hours:

- Students are introduced to the various sung elements of the Liturgy of the Hours
- The connection between liturgical purpose and musical expression of individual elements is explained:
    - Introduction
    - Hymn
    - Psalm
    - Antiphon
    - Responsory
    - Canticle
- The night prayer anthems to Our Lady are all encountered in the course of the college year:
    - Salve Regina
    - Alma Redemptoris
    - Ave Regina
    - Regina Caeli
- As the year progresses, students will participate more fully in this important aspect of Christian liturgy, taking up roles as cantors for Sunday or feast-day offices.

General Regulations for the Entrance of Seminarians

Each applicant is required to present the following to the Rector of the Seminary:

- Completed Application Form (available from the Rector's Office)
- A Letter of Nomination from his Bishop
- A Certificate of Baptism
- A Certificate of Confirmation
- A character reference from his Parish Priest
- Two character and general assessment reports - one academic and the other from his most recent employer.
- Propaedeutic Seminary Report (where applicable)

Academic Requirements:

- Where applicable, an applicant must ensure that his final examination results are sent by the Principal of his school to the Rector of Saint Patrick's National Seminary, Maynooth by the end of the second semester of the academic year ***before*** the date of entry.
- All candidates for courses at NUI Maynooth must fulfil the registration and matriculation requirements of NUI Maynooth.
- Applicants for the First Year University Class should have applied for university entry through the Central Applications Office. All applicants must be eighteen years of age at the point of entry.
- Applicants for the Diploma and Higher Diploma in Philosophy and Arts require a pass-grade (A-D) in five subjects in the Leaving certificate or its equivalent, of which three qualify as academic subjects in the MU syllabus.
- Seminarians who do not have Leaving Certificate Latin, or its equivalent, must take a two-year Latin course before they proceed to the study of Theology.

All applicants for admission to Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth as seminarians are required to comply with the regulations set out in the *National Admissions Policy*, copies of which may be had upon request to the Diocesan Vocations Director.

Further information is available from:
The Rector's Office, St Patrick's National Seminary,
Maynooth, Co. Kildare W23 TW77 seminary@spcm.ie
www.sppu.ie/seminary
+353 1 708 3727

Seminary Formation Programme

St Patrick's National Seminary Maynooth

Precari et Pascere (To Pray and to Shepherd)

"The coat of arms of the Holy Father Leo XIV
On the left field of the coat of arms of the Holy Father Leo XIV, the blue background recalls the heights of the heavens and is characterized by its Marian significance, a classic symbol referring to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the lily or fleur-de-lis (*flos florum*). In the other field, white in colour, there is the emblem of the Augustinian Order, a flaming heart pieced by an arrow. This image symbolically represents the words of Saint Augustine in the book of Confessions: "*Sagittaveras tu cor meum charitate tua*" ("You have wounded my heart with your love"). It is an element that has always been present in the emblem of the Augustinians from the sixteenth century onwards, albeit with several variations, such as the presence of the book symbolizing the Word of God capable of transforming the heart of every man, as it was for Augustine. The book also recalls the enlightened works that the Doctor of Grace gave to the Church and humanity. White (in an ivory shade in the papal coat of arms) is a recurrent colour in other coats of arms of religious orders and can be read as a symbol of holiness and purity.
The motto, "*In Illo uno unum*" ("In the one Christ we are one"), recalls the words of Saint Augustine in a sermon, the *Exposition on Psalm 128*, explaining that "in the one Christ we are one", "one in the One Christ".
In his Apostolic Letter on the 60th Anniversary of *Optatam totius* and *Presbyterorum ordinis*: *A Fidelity that Generates the Future* (8 December 2025), Pope Leo XIV invited the Church to contemplate "anew the gift of this fruitful fidelity" by recalling the teachings of the Second Vatican Council on the Priesthood which "were born of a single

inspiration of the Church, which is called to be a sign and instrument of unity for all peoples" while being aware that "the desired renewal of the whole Church depends to a great extent on a priestly ministry animated by the spirit of Christ" (#2). The Holy Father reminds all who are in the process of discerning a call to the Priesthood that "every vocation is a gift from the Father, which needs to be faithfull preserved in a dynamic of ongoing conversion" through "listening to the word of God, celebrating the sacraments, especially the Eucharistic Sacrifice; evangelisation; closeness to the least among us; and priestly fraternity, all drawing on prayer as the preeminent place for encountering the Lord" (#7). This is the attitude of mind and heart to which all seminarians who are on the journey of initial formation at St Patrick's National Seminary are called to adopt by walking the path of missionary discipleship with their formators and professors in a synodal key.

The Programme for Priestly Formation in St Patrick's National Seminary

The Formation Programme is based on the recently-published (2023) *National Ratio – The Directory for Priestly Formation in Irish Seminaries* (*DPFIS*). There are four dynamically interrelated areas of initial formation which are essential to the task of acquiring an integrated, healthy and solid priestly identity. In the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis – The Gift of the Priestly Vocation* (*RFIS*) we see that in continuity with the Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (*PDV*), there are four dimensions that interact simultaneously in the *iter* of formation and in the life of ordained ministers: the human dimension, which represents the "necessary and dynamic foundation" of all priestly life; the spiritual dimension, which helps to shape the quality of priestly ministry; the intellectual dimension, which provides the rational tools needed in order to understand the values that belong to being a pastor, to make them incarnate in daily life, and to transmit the content of the faith appropriately; the pastoral dimension, which makes possible a responsible and fruitful ecclesial service.[1] These, then, are the four main dimensions in the formation programme for Seminarians in Maynooth:

- Human Formation
- Spiritual Formation
- Intellectual Formation
- Pastoral Formation

The four dimensions comprise the content of the four major stages of initial formation: the Propaedeutic Stage (a preparatory year); the Stage of Discipleship (normally correlates with studies in Philosophy); the Configuration Stage (normally correlates with studies in Theology) and the Vocational Synthesis Stage (the final year of initial formation which correlates with ordination to the Diaconate).[2]

I. Human Formation Programme

[1] Cf. *PDV* 43-59: *AAS* 84 (1992) 731-762; *RFIS* 89.
[2] Cf. *RFIS* 57-79.

The human formation of the priest shows its special importance when related to the receivers of the mission: in order that his ministry may be humanly as credible and acceptable as possible, it is important that the priest should mould his human personality in such a way that it becomes a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ.... [St John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. On the Formation of Priests #43]

Priestly Formation is not simply about proposing an ideal image of priestly ministry for a seminarian to appropriate. The vocational journey can be seen as the unfolding of a better understanding by the seminarian of the tension that exists within him between the person he is and the person he wishes to become. In PDV *there is a fundamental insistence on human formation as the basis of all priestly formation. Priests are to be mature men. […] Moreover, 'the candidate himself is a necessary and irreplaceable agent in his own formation: all formation, priestly formation included, is ultimately a self-formation.'*[3]

Human formation, being the foundation of all priestly formation, promotes the integral growth of the person and allows the integration of all its dimensions.[4] Therefore, the human formation programme is an essential constituent of the overall formation programme and is closely inter linked with spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation. Its overall aim is to enable the Seminarian to grow in inner freedom, so that he is more able to give himself to the love and service of God and his people.

The programme strives to cultivate human qualities that enable the Seminarian to be a bridge and not an obstacle for others in their meeting with Jesus Christ. In practice this means fostering development in a number of areas, including the following:

- self-identity: self-understanding, self-acceptance and a healthy self-esteem make for greater generosity in love and service of others.
- the capacity to relate in a mature and warm way.
- integration of one's emotional needs and desires.
- mature attitudes to one's sexuality and a willingness to embrace a healthy celibate lifestyle.
- the capacity to take initiatives and assume leadership roles in a confident and assured way, avoiding rigidity of attitudes.
- the capacity for self-transcendence and renunciation and the ability to embrace the sacrifices and self-denial that a life of service entails.

Elements of the Human Formation Programme:

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[3] *DFPIS* 239.
[4] Cf. *PDV* 43; *RFIS* 94.

- The human formation programme assumes "the absolute primacy of grace in vocation" [PDV #34,36].
- The programme endeavours to take account of the particular life experience of each Seminarian so as to serve his best interest and enable him to build upon his strengths while acknowledging his weaknesses.
- Personal responsibility for growth to Christian maturity is the bedrock of the programme, requiring the Seminarian to be an active agent in his own formation. Encouragement and challenge are offered through the community life he lives and through his frequent interactions with his Spiritual Director, with his Coordinator of Human Formation and with his Coordinator of Pastoral Formation. Regular meetings between the Seminarian and his Director of Formation provide an opportunity for periodic evaluation of a Seminarian's formation journey while in seminary.
- In order to address with greater objectivity his own strengths and weaknesses, each Seminarian is encouraged to meet with the Vocational Growth Counsellor, a part-time position in the College. Many Seminarians take vocational growth counselling of their own choice, while some may be encouraged to do so by those involved in other areas of their formation. In all cases, these meetings require the consent of the Seminarian and are treated confidentially. Vocational Growth Counselling offers the Seminarian a unique opportunity to ensure that he is humanly well prepared for the work to which he is called.
- Psychological assessments can make a positive contribution to a Seminarian's growth in his formation journey, especially when development appears to be at a standstill. Many Seminarians profit from availing of this type of assessment as it can help locate emotional blockages and indicate ways forward. Psychological assessments are intended as a help to the Seminarian and an opportunity for growth. The National Admissions Policy, approved by the Irish Bishops Conference requires a psychological assessment of those who apply for entry into the seminary. In all cases the psychological assessment takes its place alongside the assessments of other people concerned with the formation of the Seminarian or prospective Seminarian.
- As holistic development is emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical and aesthetic, the Seminarian is encouraged to participate in the various facets of life on campus - debating, music, student literary productions, film and theatre, conferences and lectures, sporting and leisure facilities, societies, etc.

II. Spiritual Formation Programme

Spiritual formation.....should be conducted in such a way that the students may learn to live in intimate and unceasing union with God the Father through his Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Those who are to take on the likeness of Christ the priest by sacred ordination should form the habit of drawing close to him as friends in every detail of their lives. [Vatican Council II, *Optatam Totius.* On the Training of Priests #8]

Spiritual formation in the Seminary sets the foundation for a lifelong commitment to priestly ministry and is 'directed at nourishing and sustaining communion with God and with our brothers and sisters, in the friendship of Jesus the Good Shepherd and with an attitude of docility to the Holy Spirit.'[5] *This intimate relationship forms the heart of the seminarian in that generous and sacrificial love that marks the beginning of pastoral charity.*[6]

The journey into God, of which seminary formation is a stage, has its beginnings in baptism, is life-long, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the spiritual formation programme aims to enable the Seminarian to take on the likeness of Christ the Good Shepherd. It is to be seen as a stage in a journey which has its beginning in Baptism, is life-long and under the influence of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, it is "the work of the Holy Spirit and engages a person in his totality. It introduces him to a deep communion with Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, and leads to the total submission of one's life to the Spirit, in a filial attitude towards the Father and a trustful attachment to the Church. Spiritual formation has its roots in the experience of the Cross, which in deep communion leads to the totality of the Paschal Mystery."[7] The goal of spiritual formation, then, is to establish attitudes, habits and practices in the spiritual life that will continue after ordination.

Spiritual formation encourages a Seminarian to develop a way of Christian living that involves interior discipline and self-sacrifice. This leaves him free and willing to undertake obedience, celibacy and simplicity of lifestyle, understanding their value and importance in the life of the priest.

"The spiritual life is, indeed, an interior life, a life of intimacy with God, a life of prayer and contemplation. But this very meeting with God, and with his fatherly love for everyone, brings us face to face with the need to meet our neighbour, to give ourselves to others....following the example which Jesus has proposed to everyone as

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[5] *RFIS* 101.
[6] *DPFIS* 256; cf. *RFIS* 101.
[7] Synod of Bishops, VIII Ordinary General Assembly, *Instrumentum Laboris - The Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day,* 30; cf. *PDV* 45

a programme of life when he washed the feet of the apostles : 'I have given you an example, that you should also do as I have done to you'". [PDV #49]

Elements of the Spiritual Formation Programme:
During his time in the seminary the spiritual formation of the Seminarian is helped and supported in various ways. The daily timetable is structured to give special emphasis to community prayer. The Liturgy of the Hours is celebrated communally morning and evening (and at the end of the day for Seminarians in the Stage of Discipleship) in St Mary's Oratory. The Eucharist, 'the essential moment of the day' [PDV#48], is celebrated daily in St Mary's Oratory, which is the Seminary Chapel. St Joseph's Oratory, the St John Paul II Prayer Room and the College Chapel also provide the quiet space the Seminarian is encouraged to seek each day for personal prayer. Each morning there is a period of meditation followed by Morning Prayer. Seminarians are encouraged to avail regularly of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Outside Confessors visit the Seminary once a month. The monthly Examination of Conscience given by the Spiritual Director during the year help to deepen a Seminarian's understanding and appreciation of the Sacrament.

To facilitate his own spiritual growth, each Seminarian is required to meet regularly on an individual basis with his Spiritual Director. Spiritual direction is a key element in the Seminarian's spiritual formation at every stage, and the special task of the Spiritual Director is the formation of the Seminarian in prayer. Prayer and spiritual direction allow the Seminarian to connect and bring together the different strands of life - human, intellectual, pastoral and spiritual, and relate them to his own personal journey to God. Through it he is helped and encouraged to recognise and articulate for himself how the Spirit of God continues to challenge him in his daily life. This enables him to discern his way forward and draw close to Christ in order to put on his likeness, always keeping in mind the leadership role of the diocesan priest in the Christian community. In his mission the priest 'continues Christ's work as Teacher, Priest and Shepherd'.....and 'his ministry .....is to make Christ's body, the Church, grow into the people of God....'. [Rite of Ordination of Priests].

Through talks, conferences, group meetings and courses conducted over the year by resident Spiritual Directors, members of staff and visiting lecturers, the Seminarian's knowledge of the spiritual life is enriched and deepened. A Seminarian's studies, particularly in such areas as Sacred Scripture, Liturgy and the Theology of spirituality, also help in nurturing his spiritual life.

Retreats and Days of Recollection, in-house and at selected retreat centres, spread over the seminary year, allow the Seminarian more prolonged periods of prayer and reflection. In his first and second Theology years a Seminarian is introduced to the directed retreat. Three three-day retreats and four days of recollection spread over the seminary year create the space and the silence, which are necessary for prayer, reflection and growth in the spiritual life. The retreats take place at the beginning of

the seminary year in September, after the Christmas holidays and over the last days of Holy Week. The four days of recollection are at the beginning of November, the first Sunday of Advent, the beginning of Lent and coming up to the end-of-year examinations.

Through his active participation in the liturgy over the seasons of the Church's year, and through a comprehensive course in Liturgy and Sacramental Theology, a Seminarian deepens his awareness of 'the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ who died and rose again and is present and active in the Church's sacraments' [PDV #48]. In this way he is helped to prepare for the role of the priest in the liturgical assembly.

Admission to Candidacy for Ordination as Deacon and Priest and the Ministries of Reader and of Acolyte make significant stages in a Seminarian's time in the seminary. Admission to Candidacy for Ordination as Deacon and Priest takes place at the end of the Stage of Discipleship and is both a public declaration of a Seminarian's intention to give himself for the service of Christ and of his Church and the Church's call to him to prepare himself for this ministry. The Ministry of Reader (normally conferred first year of the Stage of Configuration) appoints him to read the Word of God in the liturgical assembly. The Ministry of Acolyte (normally conferred during the second year of the Stage of Configuration) calls him to a special service of the altar and of the Lord's Body and Blood. This personal response to the call to service culminates in his ordination to the Diaconate (which usually takes place after the Vocational Synthesis Stage in the diocese in which he will serve) and in his Ordination to the priesthood (which also normally takes place in the diocese in which he will serve).

III. Intellectual Formation Programme

The commitment to study, which takes up no small part of the time of those preparing for priesthood, is not in fact an external and secondary dimension of their human, Christian, spiritual and vocational growth. In reality, through study, especially the study of Theology, the future priest assents to the word of God, grows in his spiritual life and prepares himself to fulfil his pastoral ministry. [PDV#51]

Candidates for the Priesthood must prepare themselves with diligent attention, by deepening their knowledge of the philosophical and theological sciences, with a good introduction to canon law, humanities and history. This preparation seeks to give a reason for hope (cf. 1 Pet 3:15), *to allow Divine Revelation to become known and to bring all peoples to the obedience of faith* (cf. Rom 16:26).[8]

The purpose of the intellectual formation in the seminary is to enable the Seminarian to acquire, along with a general culture which is relevant to present-day needs, an

[8] *DPFIS* 291; cf. *RFIS* 116.

extensive and solid learning in the sacred sciences such as can give a firm foundation to their faith, can enable it to mature and can equip them to proclaim it effectively to the modern world.[9] Intellectual formation is aimed at achieving a solid competence in Philosophy and Theology, along with a more general educational preparation, enough to allow the Seminarian to proclaim the Gospel message to the people of our own day in a way that is credible and can be understood. It seeks to enable him to enter into fruitful dialogue with the contemporary world and to uphold the truth of the faith by the light of reason, thereby revealing its beauty.[10]

Therefore, Intellectual formation is an important area in the preparation of the Seminarian as a minister of the Gospel. He must grow in his knowledge and understanding of the faith that he professes and is to proclaim. But if he is to prepare himself as an effective preacher of this faith, he must also develop his knowledge and understanding both of the human person to whom the Gospel is addressed and of the world or the culture in which it is to be preached and lived. Hence the importance of the academic studies that contribute to the Seminarian's intellectual formation.

Philosophy

Philosophy is studied during the earlier part of initial formation and is usually accompanied by the study of some arts or science subjects. Philosophy leads the Seminarian to an understanding of the human person and the significance of human life, of the place of the person in relation to reality, and of the fate of the person. It nurtures an appreciation of human thought through the ages and in different cultural contexts. In its own right, it is an autonomous and ancient discipline, but it also has an important relationship with Theology, which in various ways depends on it and shares many questions with it. The proper intellectual formation of the Seminarian and the study of Theology require a knowledge of Philosophy, and this is best pursued before he takes up his Theology course.

The subjects in arts and science taken by the Seminarian alongside his Philosophy studies contribute in their different ways to the broadening of the mind, the deepening of cultural appreciation, and the sharpening of intellectual interest. These qualities in the longer-term help to equip the future priest for his ministry, and more immediately, prepare him for the broad range of studies that he will encounter in his Theology course.

Seminarians entering first year have two options:

- Seminarians who matriculate may do a three-year degree course in the *National University of Ireland, Maynooth (MU)* in either Arts, Philosophy, Celtic Studies or Science. In either course, a wide range of subjects is

[9] Cf. *OT* 13, 17; *GS* 62; *DPFIS* 290.
[10] *RFIS* 116.

available from which to choose. Seminarians are required to study Philosophy as a subject to degree level. Aspirants for the priesthood who are precluded by their studies (e.g., Science, Celtic Studies) are required to take the One Year Diploma in Philosophy after their degree.

- Seminarians who have not matriculated but have reached a pass grade (A - D) in at least five subjects in the Leaving Certificate or its equivalent, of which three qualify as academic subjects in the *NUI* matriculation syllabus, are required to do a two-year diploma course in Philosophy and Arts. Seminarians who complete the course successfully receive a diploma, and those who reach a higher standard may be recommended for a degree course (BD) in Theology.

Theology

Faith seeks understanding, and this understanding is the task and the goal of Theology. Hence, to be able "to account for the hope that is in you" (1Pet 3:15), each Seminarian is required to take a four-year course of studies in Theology. The study of Theology helps the Seminarian to develop his knowledge of all that pertains to the Gospel, to penetrate more deeply into its meaning, and so to grow in his love for God, for the Church, and for all those redeemed by Jesus Christ. It encourages him as a believer to ask questions about his own faith in order to reach a more profound understanding of the faith itself. In this way faith and mature reflection are intimately connected in his theological study.

In addition, as one preparing to be a Minister of the Word, the Seminarian needs an ever-deeper knowledge of the presence of God in our world. He will need to serve with the assurance of faith a society that is at times marked by religious indifference and by fresh problems and questions brought up by scientific and technological discussions. Through the study of Theology, the Seminarian will be enabled to proclaim the Gospel of Christ and to make it credible to the legitimate demands of human reason and of changing culture.

Proclamation of the word of God

As the proclamation of the word of God is a central part of a priest's ministry, each Seminarian is offered a comprehensive programme of speech training and homiletics throughout his time in seminary. In the earlier part of his course the emphasis is on public speaking. This is a two-year programme directed by a trained speech tutor. During his first two years in seminary each Seminarian is assigned to a small group which meets each week with the tutor, and he is given practical experience at developing his communication skills in a supportive, yet challenging environment.

In his Theology years the emphasis shifts more specifically to the proclamation of the word of God. While the training is nourished and informed by the content of theological studies, the approach is again practical. It includes preparing and delivering homilies, allowing for regular appraisal and evaluation of one's style of

delivery, content, etc. The programme helps the Seminarian to develop the skills and all the professional competence necessary to preach the word of God. This programme forms part of the course which is entitled *Preaching and Presiding* and which is directed by the Faculty of Theology.

IV. Pastoral Formation Programme

The whole formation imparted to candidates for the priesthood aims at preparing them to enter into communion with the charity of Christ the Good Shepherd. Hence, their formation in its different aspects must have a fundamentally pastoral character. [PDV #57]

The call to exercise leadership in service of the People of God 'requires a formation that makes future priests experts in the art of pastoral discernment, that is to say, able to listen deeply to real situations and capable of good judgement in making choices and decisions. To make pastoral discernment effective, formation in the evangelical style of listening must take central place. […] He who sets himself to listen to God and to his brothers and sisters knows that it is the Spirit who guides the Church towards the fullness of truth (cf. Jn 16:13). He also knows that, in keeping with the mystery of the Incarnation, this fullness of truth sprouts gradually in the real life of a human being and in the signs of history.[11]

The whole programme of formation for the priesthood aims at preparing Seminarians to enter into communion with the charity of Christ, the Good Shepherd. Since the seminary is intended to prepare Seminarians to be shepherds in the image of Christ, priestly formation must be permeated by the same spirit. "Pastoral Theology is not just an art. Nor is it a set of exhortations, experiences and methods. It is theological in its own right because it receives from the faith the principles and criteria for the pastoral action of the Church in history."[12] In other words, pastoral formation must be rooted in Pastoral Theology. This pastoral spirit which permeates pastoral formation will enable Seminarians to demonstrate that same compassion, generosity, love for all, especially for the poor, and zeal for the Kingdom that characterised the public ministry of the Son of God. This can be summed up as pastoral charity.[13]

Naturally, however, a formation of a specifically pastoral character must be provided.[14] It should be such as to help the Seminarian to acquire the inner freedom to live the

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[11] *DPFIS* 304; cf. *RFIS* 120.
[12] *PDV* 57.
[13] *RFIS* 119.
[14] *Ibid.* Cf. *PDV* 58: "The seminary which educates must seek really and truly to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of being a shepherd, in the conscious and mature assumption of his responsibilities, in the interior habit of evaluating problems

apostolate as service, able to see the work of God in the hearts and lives of the people. Seen in this way, when he is an ordained minister, pastoral activity will take on the form of an ongoing school of evangelisation. In this time, the Seminarian will begin to see himself as a group leader and to be present as a man of communion. He will do so by listening and careful discernment of situations, as well as cooperating with others and encouraging their 'ministeriality.' In a particular way, Seminarians must be duly prepared to work together with permanent deacons and with the world of the laity, appreciating their particular contribution. It is also necessary for candidates for the ministerial priesthood to receive a suitable formation on the evangelical nature of consecrated life in its varied expressions, on the charism that is proper to it and on its canonical aspects, the better to ensure fruitful collaboration.[15]

Since the pastoral formation programme aims to prepare Seminarians for pastoral ministry, throughout his time in the seminary the Seminarian will be an active participant in a co-ordinated pastoral programme that provides practical experience, reflection and participative learning.

Elements of the Pastoral Formation Programme:
A series of pastoral placements introduce the Seminarian to diverse and increasingly demanding pastoral situations. This is preceded by appropriate preparation and supported throughout by regular supervision. The development of each one's skills is enhanced through participation in group-work, making possible mature theological reflection on his experience. The ultimate aim of the programme is the fostering of the gifts necessary for a ministry of service.

The seminary which educates must seek really and truly to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of being a shepherd, in the conscious and mature assumption of his responsibilities, in the interior habit of evaluating problems and establishing priorities and looking for solutions on the basis of honest motivations of faith and according to the theological demands inherent in pastoral work. [PDV #58]

The structure of the pastoral programme is cumulative, both in terms of the degree of difficulty of the placement and the depth of subsequent analysis of the pastoral experience itself. The Seminarian is offered a gradual introduction (Module 1), culminating in a full year of pastoral experience and learning (Module 4). The programme aims to be existential, integrating, proportionate and supported.

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and establishing priorities and looking for solutions on the basis of honest motivations of faith and according to the theological demands inherent in pastoral work." Cf. also, C.I.C., can. 258.

[15] *RFIS* 119.

Placements and the reflection on pastoral experience occur between October and Easter each year. Prior preparation takes place as required by the nature of the placement. Placements are supported by the help of a contact person *in situ*. Analysis and reflection occur in a group format with peers, facilitated by a trained member of the *Irish Association of Pastoral Formation*. This format aims at enabling each participant to reflect constructively on his field placement, to recognise and affirm his unique gifts and to identify and articulate areas of personal and professional growth. It also encourages a Seminarian to integrate his theological education with his pastoral practice and to become aware of the ways in which his ministry affects others.

The pastoral programme offered by the College does not confine itself to the academic year. Seminarians are encouraged to use some of their time away from the seminary, particularly during their summer holiday, to broaden their pastoral experience. Placements within a Seminarian's own diocese are of particular value and recognition of this work is given in the overall assessment of the Seminarian. The particular placements are chosen through consultation between the Seminarian, his Coordinator of Pastoral Formation and a Contact Person in the diocese with the specific needs of the particular Seminarian in mind.

The Structure of the Pastoral Programme

The programme throughout the College year is divided into four modules.

Module I

The Seminarian is gradually introduced to pastoral work through a pastoral placement, which he attends on a regular basis and in which he is supported by an on-site contact person.

Module II

The Seminarian attends his placement weekly and presents a *pastoral event report* to his *pastoral group meeting*: each Seminarian presents one report to the group for reflective analysis.

Module III

The placement visit occurs weekly and there is a weekly *pastoral reflection meeting*: on two occasions throughout the year, each Seminarian presents a verbatim to the group for theological reflection and analysis.

Module IV

Usually undertaken in the second year of the Stage of Configuration or the final year, the Seminarian completes a Higher Diploma in Pastoral Theology.

Horarium

Sunday

07.45	Morning Prayer followed by breakfast
09.30	Eucharist *(St Mary's Oratory)*
21.45	Night Prayer

Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday

07.00 – 07.35	Meditation and Morning Prayer
07.45	Eucharist
09.05	Classes commence
18.00	The Angelus (Eastertide the *Regina Coeli*)
18.01	Evening Prayer followed by a moment's silence and Rosary (*Monday and Tuesday*) Following Rosary, the Seminary Community will gather for its evening meal. This will conclude with Grace After Meals at 19.05
21.45	Night Prayer

Monday

As above except for:

17.00	Spiritual Conference (Discipleship)
21.00	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament *(simple reposition after Night Prayer)*
21.45	Night Prayer

Tuesday

As above except for:

17.00	Spiritual Conference (Configuration)

Wednesday

As above except for:

17.30	Sacred Music Practicum
18.05 – 18.30	Liturgy Group Evening Prayer
21.00	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament *(simple reposition after Night Prayer)*
21.45	Night Prayer

Thursday

As above except for:

07.40 – 08.15	Meditation and Morning Prayer
18.10	Eucharist
19.15	Evening Prayer and Night Prayer in private

Friday Evening Prayer and Night Prayer in private*

***Except for occasions such as Retreats, Ministries, etc**.

Saturday

08.30	Morning Prayer and Eucharist *(Seminarians are also free to make their own arrangements for Eucharist on Saturday)*
19.30	Evening Prayer & Exposition *(Sacrament of Reconciliation available))*
20.45	Night Prayer & Benediction